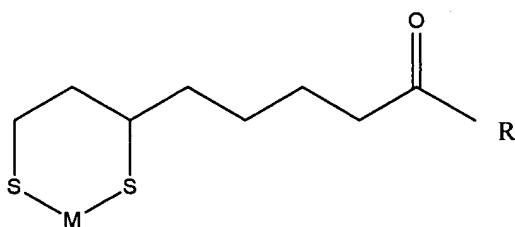


Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A melanin eliminator preparation comprising a metal chelate compound represented by the following formula (I),



(I)

wherein M denotes a metal, and R denotes hydroxyl, O-lower alkyl, an amine bonded at N, an amino acid bonded at N, or a peptide bonded at N, or a pharmacologically acceptable salt thereof.

2. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 1 wherein the metal chelate compound is 6,8-dimercaptooctanoic acid metal chelate compound.
3. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 1 wherein the metal chelate compound is a 6,8-dimercaptooctanoic acid lower alkyl ester metal chelate compound.
4. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 3 wherein the 6,8-dimercaptooctanoic acid lower alkyl ester metal chelate compound is a 6,8-dimercaptooctanoic acid ethyl ester metal chelate compound.

5. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 1 wherein the metal chelate compound is a N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)amine metal chelate compound.

6. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 5 wherein the N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)amine metal chelate compound is selected from the group consisting of 6,8-dimercaptoooctanoic acid amide metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)-2-aminoethanol metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)isopropylamine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)melatonin metal chelate, and N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)-2-aminopyridine metal chelate.

7. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation claim 1 wherein the metal chelate compound is a N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)amino acid metal chelate compound.

8. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 7 wherein the N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)amino acid metal chelate compound is selected from the group consisting of N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)- α -amino acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)- ω -amino acid metal chelate, and N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)-special amino acids metal chelate compound.

9. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 8 wherein the N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)- α -amino acid metal chelate is selected from the group consisting of N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl) glycine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)alanine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)threonine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)serine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)aspartic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptoooctanoyl)glutamic

acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)phenylalanine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)methionine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)norleucine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)cysteine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)hydroxyproline metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)histidine metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-5-hydroxytryptophan metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)penicillamine metal chelate and N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)lysine metal chelate compounds.

10. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 9 wherein the N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)- ω -amino acid metal chelate and the N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)special amino acid metal chelate compounds are selected from the group consisting of N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-3-aminopropionic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-4-aminobutyric acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-6-aminohexanoic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-4-trans-aminomethyl-1-cyclohexane carboxylic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)sulfanilic acid metal chelate, N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)anthranilic acid metal chelate and N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)anthranilic acid ethyl ester metal chelate compounds.

11. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation claim 1 the metal chelate compound is a N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)peptide metal chelate compound.

12. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation claim 11 wherein the N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)peptide metal chelate compound is selected from the group

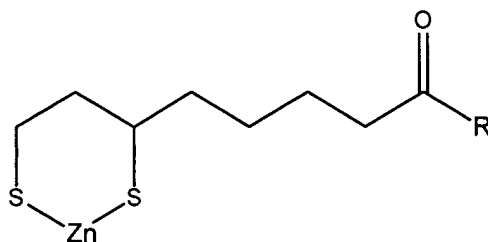
consisting of N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)aspartylglycine metal chelate and N-(6,8-dimercaptooctanoyl)threonylglycine metal chelate.

13. (currently amended) The melanin eliminator preparation of ~~one of claims 1 to 12 above~~ claim 1 wherein the metal is zinc.

14. (currently amended) The melanin eliminator preparation of ~~one of claims 1 to 12 above~~ claim 1 wherein the preparation is a dermatological preparation for external use.

15. (original) The melanin eliminator preparation of claim 14 wherein the preparation is a cosmetic preparation.

16. (original) A zinc chelate compound represented by the following formula (II),

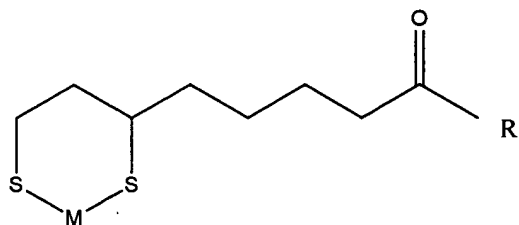


(II)

wherein R denotes hydroxyl, O-alkyl, an amine bonded at N or a peptide bonded at N, or a pharmacologically acceptable salt thereof.

17. (original) The zinc chelate compound of claim 16 wherein the compound is a 6,8-dimercaptooctanoic acid zinc chelate compound, or a pharmacologically acceptable salt thereof.

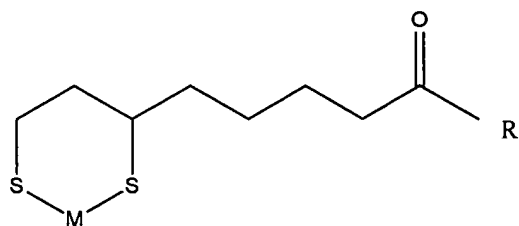
18. (original) A method for elimination of melanin comprising administering to a human an effective amount of a metal chelate compound represented by the following formula (I),



(I)

wherein M denotes a metal, and R denotes hydroxyl, O-lower alkyl, an amine bonded at N, an amino acid bonded at N or a peptide bonded at N, or a pharmacologically acceptable salt thereof.

19. (original) Use of a metal chelate compound represented by the following formula (I),



(I)

wherein M denotes a metal, and R denotes hydroxyl, O-lower alkyl, an amine bonded at N, an amino acid bonded at N or a peptide bonded at N, or a pharmacologically acceptable salt thereof for the manufacture of a melanin eliminating preparation.